

News Release

Executive Director Named for Northwest Minnesota Area Health Education Center in Crookston

By Joyce Johnson, Krista Lemos on Friday, August 17, 2007

CROOKSTON, Minn. (August 17, 2007) – Officials from the University of Minnesota, Crookston and RiverView Health announced the hiring of Joan Porraz as the executive director for the Northwest Minnesota Area Health Center (AHEC) in Crookston on Thursday, August 17, 2007.

Porraz will provide administrative leadership for the Northwest Minnesota Area Health Education Center, including regional development of a service platform to support health careers promotion, student and resident experiential education, community awareness and continuing health professional education. She will assume her role in mid-September.

Since 1996, Porraz has served as the director of the Head Start Program at the Tri-Valley Opportunity Council in Crookston, Minn., and prior to that, she worked as the parent involvement coordinator. Her past experience also includes work as a program reviewer with the Program Review Instrument for Systems Monitor (PRISM) through the Office of Head Start in the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

"We are extremely pleased that someone of Joan's caliber was selected to develop our NWMN AHEC office," said Debra Boardman, RiverView Health president and chief executive officer. "We need to be planning and working now to assure that we have a supply of well qualified health care professionals in the future. With Joan's leadership, I'm sure NW Minnesota will be well served in that capacity."

In the past, Porraz provided leadership as vice president of the National Migrant Head Start Association and served on numerous other boards and committees. She is currently the Farmworker Health Services, Inc., Board Chair, a role she has held since November 2006. Porraz has presented at a number of state and national conferences including the Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral Conference in April 2006.

"With her professional knowledge, grant writing ability and her interest in health care, Joan Porraz brings to this position a wealth of skills and experience working collaboratively and in partnership with all sectors of community life," said University of Minnesota, Crookston Chancellor Charles H. Casey. "These skills are important to healthcare and to the future."

AHEC is a federal/state cooperative agreement to educate health professions students in medically underserved areas of the state. The University of Minnesota Academic Health Center serves as the primary academic partner for Minnesota AHEC. The Academic Health Center is home to the University of Minnesota's six health professional schools and colleges as well as several health-related centers and institutes.

Crookston was chosen as the location for the Northwest Minnesota AHEC in January 2007. The Southern AHEC is based in Willmar; the Northeast AHEC is based in Hibbing; and, the Central AHEC is based in Fergus Falls.

The University of Minnesota, Crookston (UMC) delivers more than 25 applied-science undergraduate degree programs and 50 concentrations, including online degrees, in agriculture; arts, humanities and social sciences; business; math, science and technology; and natural resources. Invent yourself at the University of Minnesota, Crookston – become a leader, innovate through technology and research and secure the career you want. To learn more, visit www.UMCrookston.edu.

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2900 University Ave., Crookston, MN 56716
800-862-6466 | 218-281-6510 | umcinfo@umn.edu
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